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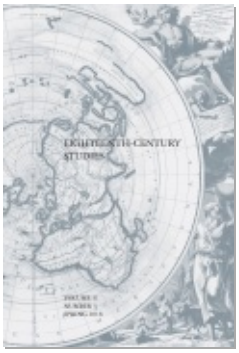

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"O Thou Great God of Trade, O Subject of my Song!" Dutch Poems on Trade, 1770–1830

Gert-Jan Johannes & Inger Leemans

In the 1770s, just when the Dutch Republic could no longer ignore the fact that it had lost its central position as an international economic and military power, a number of long poems and treatises appeared that sang the praises of the central role trade had played in transforming the Dutch Republic from a backwater into "Europe's center":

ô Wonderlijk gewest!
In 't bloed van Batoos kroost gevest,
Gij groeit in 't woest geklots der opgeruide baren,
En blijft, hoe kleen ook van begrip,
Het prachtigst schouwtooneel der waereldhandelaren;
Europaas middenstip.[1]

[O wondrous country
Wrought here by Bato's progeny,
That waxes among the spray of ribald tides,
However small, for size is here no matter,
You are the glorious stage of merchants from all sides,
Europe's center].

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The poems were to set a new literary fashion. Over the next six decades, Dutch poets would regularly come back to trade as a central theme for their poetry. And they would do so with much zeal: the sheer length of these trade epics already indicates that Dutch authors considered poetry a powerful instrument for reflection on commerce. Between 1770 and 1830, around a few peak moments (1775, 1815, and 1825), some fifteen remarkably long poems, varying from 350 to 700 lines, were published which devoted themselves exclusively to the theme of trade.[2] Most of these poems were written by merchants, clerks, or regents. This group of authors differs quite significantly from those who dominated the literary scene in this period, most notably clergymen, jurists, and scholars.

In this article, we give center stage to this hitherto overlooked corpus of poems. Although trade might seem a quite prosaic subject for poetry, in the period between 1770 and 1830 Dutch authors seemed to find it worthwhile to turn to issues from current Dutch and international debates on trade, and to transform these issues into major subjects for poetry. In their odes to trade, they present trade as a respectable occupation, a source of wealth, a civilizing and pacifying force, and an important mechanism for redistributing resources on a global scale. Paradoxically as it may seem, with the ongoing decline of the Dutch economy and power base, the Dutch poets take their praise of trade to new extremes. Trade is elevated to the level of a divine power, not only comparable to worshipped phenomena like art and poetry, but to "Nature" or even to God. In this article, we argue that Dutch poets felt the need to revive the Dutch economy and culture through their literary labor. By elevating trade above the level of human undertaking, the Dutch poets did not have to pronounce upon the cause of the decline of commerce and the policies that might help to revive it. Instead, they evoked trade as a god. Worshipping the God of trade could help to raise the spirits of Dutch citizens.

SAVING "EUROPE'S CENTER" FROM ECONOMIC DECLINE

Since the end of the sixteenth century, trade had been vital to the Dutch Republic's economic growth and self-image. During the early modern period, the Dutch Virgin was regularly portrayed with Mercury by her side. Amsterdam canal houses often chose Mercury for decorations and house names. Famous Dutch authors such as Joost van den Vondel wrote odes to the Amsterdam Stock Exchange and to the tradesmen who had "wrested" the Dutch polders from the sea.[3] While in other countries trade was often discredited as an occupation unsuitable for distinguished persons, the Dutch Republic early on developed a positive discourse on the importance of merchants and trade for the prosperity of the young nation.[4] This was not accomplished without effort. The concerns transmitted by the classical Christian tradition about the corrupting influence lurking in the submission to greed and plenty were also deep-felt within the Republic.[5] From the 1620s on, in merchant discourses, the moral challenges facing the profit-seeking merchants were avidly debated, while stressing the importance of philosophical, literary, and moral education for Christian merchants.[6]

Civic virtue could supply a solution. Merchants were supposed to aspire to a higher goal in their private commercial enterprises: the prosperity of the nation.[7] Through this balance between commercial and moral issues on the individual and

Figure 1. "Koophandel" (Trade). Anonymous engraving from a series of emblems on Dutch society, around 1625. The other emblems cover policy, religion, science and crafts, war, and the Dutch landscape. In this emblem, and the accompanying poem, trade is personified by the wise and adventurous merchant. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-76.984

the national level, the public appreciation of merchants improved over time.[8] The South Sea Bubble or "windhandel" [wind trade] of 1720 challenged this positive discourse on commerce, but the questioning of commerce was only temporary. In general, the negative consequences of the wind trade were limited. In plays on the subject, a tone of lighthearted satire and a fascination with the trade spectacle were predominant. Soon after the bubble, odes to the Amsterdam bourse and to trade in general started to appear again.[9]

In the 1770s, the discourse on commerce gained new momentum. Six long poems were published that sang the praises of trade as the essential motor for the wealth and strength of the Dutch nation. Some of the poems were written by authors well known in the Netherlands, such as the aristocratic regent Onno Zwier van Haren, or the Zeeland mayor Jan Macquet.[10] Others were written by lesser known poets, such as the Rotterdam merchant A.H. Hagendoorn, and J.A. Bakker, an unsuccessful merchant from Harlingen who lived by his pen.

At first sight, the eighteenth-century poems seem to place themselves expressly in the seventeenth-century tradition. J.A. Bakker, for instance, concludes his poem "De lof van den Nederlandschen koophandel" [In Praise of Dutch Trade] with a quote from Vondel's *Lof der Zeevaart* (1623) [*In Praise of Shipping*].[11] But the reference also indicates that the focus has shifted. Vondel wrote two long poems on shipping, in which trade also features.[12] Bakker and his companions wrote

Figure 2. Gerard de Lairesse, "Mercury observes Trade and Navigation" (1670). In this print, trade is personified as a woman with Mercury's staff (caduceus) in hand. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-46.735

poems in which traders and trade are the central subject. Moreover, they point the spotlight not at a particular merchant, or at the trade of the city of Amsterdam—as in the famous seventeenth-century poem *Ystroom* [*The River IJ*; 1671] by Antonides van der Goes—nor specifically at the Amsterdam Bourse. Instead, the eighteenth-century poems investigate trade as a general phenomenon, with its own history and proper rules. In analyzing the past, present, and projected future of Dutch trade, the poems also pay considerable attention to the moral economy of the merchant.

The French may well have inspired the Dutch poets on this subject. From 1760 on, several long odes to *Le commerce* appeared in France.[13] Like their Dutch counterparts, French poets trace long lines through history. They often start in paradise or in an *aura aetas* (Golden Age) and have trade develop from Egypt, via

the Middle East and ancient Greece to Italy, and further with Portugal out onto the world seas.[14] These historical paths always have a clear direction and a well-considered end goal. For the French, the French monarchy is the epitome, for the Dutch, the Dutch Republic.

The Dutch poems should be understood in the general context of the Dutch economic situation and enlightened civic culture. The stanza we first quoted is taken from the poem *De lof van den Nederlandschen koophandel* [*In Praise of Dutch Trade*], which won the merchant A.H. Hagedoorn the gold medal at the Hague poetic society Kunstliefde Spaart geen Vlijt [The Love of Art Spares no Effort] in 1777. The society had held a competition for the best poem "In Praise of Dutch Trade." Two other poems on the same subject were also awarded prizes, both by J.A. Bakker, the failed Harlingen merchant.[15] The poetic society's competition can be seen as the poetry equivalent of a prose essay competition held a few years earlier by the Hollandsche Maatschappij der Weetenschappen [Dutch Society of the Sciences] on the question: "What is the Foundation of Dutch Trade, of its Growth and Flowering? Until Now, What Causes and Events Have Exposed it to Changes and Decline?" The Society, which awarded prizes to three treatises on the subject, had been established in 1752 as part of a campaign to solve a problem observed with mounting anxiety: the economic and, in connection, cultural "decline" of the Republic.[16] The idea was generally accepted that, after the "Golden" seventeenth century, the Netherlands had been overtaken on all sides by its larger neighbors. The Dutch Republic no longer ruled the waves and no longer harbored Europe's greatest artists and scholars. It was now small amidst the larger European nations. Scientific societies, such as the Dutch Society of the Sciences, cast themselves as intellectual centers for the "restoration" of the nation.

Although initially the causes of decline were generally held to be moral—sloth, decadence, luxury, and "frenchification"—the economic questions drew significant attention. The Dutch Society of the Sciences even established an "Oeconomische Tak" [Economic Branch], which was designed expressly to tackle economic problems. The interest in economic questions also expressed itself in an active press in this field. Around 1770, several studies on the theme of trade were published, on top of journals in which treatises and poems on trade were incorporated.[17] Indicative of this renewed interest for commerce is that precisely around 1770 a journal devoted exclusively to trade was started in the Republic: *De Koopman* [The Merchant].[18] All major enlightened studies that discussed trade were translated into Dutch, such as the discourses of Hume, Montesquieu, Forbonnais, and Condillac.[19] Moreover, the Dutch translators entered into a debate with this international tradition and adapted it to Dutch discourse through introductions and footnotes to their translations.

In these discussions on trade, several important issues are treated. First is the necessity of trade for the wealth of nations in general. Understandably, the Dutch take the standpoint that trade is of central importance, that the Netherlands saw this at a very early stage, and that the Dutch have played a leading role among European nations. Dirk Hoola van Nooten, for example, the second Dutch translator of Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*, opens his translation of the chapter on trade with a page-long footnote accusing Montesquieu of omitting a longer introduction on the origins of trade and on its centrality to civil society.[20] Hoola

van Nooten's criticism of Montesquieu is similar to that of Elie Luzac. In a 1759 French-language essay, the most famous theorist of trade and commerce in the Dutch Republic (contemporaries stated that Luzac "was passionately interested in commerce") had already taken up an argument with the French philosopher to defend the blessings of trade.[21] Luzac's *Hollandsch Rijkdom* (1780–1783), an adaptation of J. Accarias de Serionne's 1768 *La Richesse de la Hollande*, continues this debate on the supremacy of trade.

A second issue that emerges in these discourses on trade is the relationship between ethics and commerce. Many Dutch authors and translators objected to Montesquieu's claim that *commerce corrompt les moeurs pures* [commerce corrupts the pure morals]. Luzac, however, seems to agree with Montesquieu's concerns about the moral threats of modern commercial society. Merchants are led by self-interest. Their urge to maximize profit can easily clash with their civic duties, can narrow their minds (merchants are supposed to be comparatively ignorant about politics and history), and can seduce them to dangerous financial speculation.[22]

Luzac's most striking deviation from the Dutch commercial republican tradition concerns a third important issue: the role of the (republican or monarchical) state in securing the free expansion of trade. While the Dutch authors generally agree that the authorities should play a significant role in the regulation of trade, the Orangist Luzac never ceases to stress that this should be done under the auspices and responsibility of the stadholder.

A POETIC DISCOURSE ON TRADE

It is well-known that Dutch poets, challenged by the contemporary economic and political developments, joined learned societies and art academies, to help revitalize Dutch society.[23] However, scholars have largely overlooked the fact that they did so by embracing commerce and trade as subjects for their poetry. This is a pity, for the Dutch trade poems take an interesting position in the economic debates, siding with the Dutch translators and political economists in their absolute defense of trade as the foundation for the (former) wealth and strength of the Dutch nation. The poets differ from scholars such as Luzac, however, by ignoring discussions of natural law and contract theory, and simply focusing on the role of trade in the historical development of stable and civilized society. Most eighteenth-century trade poems start with the mythical "Batavians," or with classical society and the rise of commercial centers such as Phoenica, Tyrus, Crete, and Athens. Onno Zwier van Haren takes the reader further back by distinguishing between the four stages of human economic and civil development.[24] For Van Haren, history starts with a combination of post-paradise and subsistence society:

> Ik denk dat d'eerste mensch, geschaapen,
> Het aller-eerst aan kleed'ren dagt,
> En na dat Eva was beslaapen,
> De honger zorg voor eeten bragt.[25]
>
> [I think that man, when first created,
> started to search for some kind of attire,
> And, once his lust with Eve was sated,
> To food would then turn his desire].

Hunting and gathering are taken over by the pastoral and agricultural phases: "D'een vond aard-appels, d'ander kooren,/ Een derde zag een lam gebooren" [One found potatoes, someone else corn,/ A third saw that a lamb was born]. This eventually leads to discord, as people grow envious of each other's wealth. Mankind is saved by a new hero: the merchant. He finds a new way to balance goods and supplies between peoples. A new phase of civilization is started.

On the issue of ethics and trade, both Macquet and Van Haren contrast nobility and aristocracy with "the noble merchant." Macquet poses a rhetorical question: "Wie dan een dwaes zal nu eens Koopmans naem niet roemen?/ Een Koopman niet met eerbied noemen?" [Who but a fool would not praise the merchant's name?/ Who would not honor the merchant?] Only the "gezwollen adeldom" [inflated aristocracy] would look down on the merchant and his trade. Macquet and Van Haren advocate a re-evaluation of commerce, which they label a "noble art." Van Haren's poem "The Koopman" [The Merchant] is addressed to his son Duco. The poem aims to reconcile Duco with the fact that, although trained as a soldier, he is now pursuing a career in business.

Of course, the poets cannot deny the overt tension between commercial desires and Christian morality. Van Haren admits that commerce in principle is founded in human passions, especially self-interest: "De menschen zyn in alle tyden,/ In ieder Land, in elk Climaat,/ Geneegen 't bleek gebrek te myden,/ Geneigd te minnen eygenbaat." [Hence, man is at all times,/ In every country, in each clime,/ Inclined to shun privation,/ And prone to self-gratification].[26] Like Icarus, merchants are susceptible to be drawn in by their overstrained wants and needs, and on a national level, luxury can threaten the national spirit or even threaten the spirit of trade itself. However, through qualities like industriousness and self-interest their morality can be secured. Even through the very profit they generate, merchants serve their country and help to restore and improve its strength, unlike the nobility. Macquet states:

> Een handelaer, al is zyn deugd de strengste niet
> In alles, wat 's lands wet gebiedt,
> Brengt echter voordeel aen, en kan geen' ramp verwekken;
> Maer eerlooze edelliên zyn vlekken
> En last van 't Vaderland.[27]
>
> [A merchant will seldom adhere
> Strictly to what the laws require,
> Yet will bring profit, no disasters.
> But disgraceful noble masters
> Burden and blemish the Fatherland].

In the eighteenth-century poems, "eigenbaat," "begeerte," or "begeerzucht" [roughly equivalent to "self-interest," "desire," and "yearning"] are liberated from their traditionally negative connotation. In this respect, the Dutch texts are part of the transition first stipulated by Hirschman, from the emotionally-charged "desire" for wealth to the more neutral "interest."

Glorification of firm government cannot readily be found in the Dutch poems. In this respect they differ essentially from their French epic forerunners (that all laud strong monarchical rule as a prerequisite for *Le commerce*), as well as from

the Dutch economic discourse that developed through translations, treatises, and lectures. This discourse usually devotes more attention to policy making, either to more regulations, or to *laissez-faire* solutions.

In the Dutch poems, the state does not so much provide a precondition for trade, but rather is its consequence. Through the industry of the merchants, the prosperity and therefore the (international) position of the state is strengthened. Tyrannical states can threaten trade:

> De Handel, bij 't geklots der golven opgevoed,
> Dult nooit dat een Tiran, door overmoed aan 't blaaken,
> Zich meester van zijn recht of vrijheid zoekt te maaken.
> Hij 's vrij en wil geensins, dat iemand hem beperk.[28]
>
> [So Trade, raised on the rocking of the waves,
> Abides no Tyrant, reckless in his might,
> Who tries to take its freedom and its right.
> It must be free, without any restrictions].

Freedom is essential for the development of trade, the poets repeat over and over again. States do have an important task in protecting this freedom of trade, and the Republican State, most poets seem to agree, is its best guarantor. In monarchies, the self-interest of the prince will lead him to try to employ trade for his own profit. Things are very different "with Bato's progeny, that bears freedom as its mark." Through freedom, trade can prosper, and is thus in a position to strengthen the state: a win-win situation. The Orangist poet Bakker is the only poet who does not only praise the "fathers of state" for guarding trade, but also explicitly mentions the Dutch stadholder who, as his forefather William of Orange did, should protect trade through advise and the military: "Bescherm dan daar 't moet zijn den Handel dezer Staten./ Weer met uw raad en daad en kling en speer." [Advice then and assist the commerce of the States./ Protect it with your counsel, sword and with your spear].

Although the poets all agree that trade needs to be free, they do not put this in the perspective of freedom from government regulation, in the political economy sense of the term. The Dutch poets have a strong tendency to describe freedom in terms of nature. If freedom (just as trade) is a natural force, there is only so much governments or stadholders can do. Poets talk of "vrye stranden" [free beaches] and "vrye pekelvloed" [free briny tides]. On the one hand, they might have Grotius' juridical concept of the free seas in mind, on the other hand, the natural images rob the concept of freedom of human agency. In the nineteenth century, this process of "naturalisation" will take over the whole discourse on trade, as trade will come to be described as a force of nature.

THE DYNAMICS OF TRADE POETRY, 1790–1830

For two decades after 1790, trade is virtually absent in Dutch poetry. Only from 1813 on, at a time when the trade theme engenders a fresh wave of publications, do the Dutch poets once more take up the pen to laud its accomplishments in even longer poems than before.[29] This trajectory —revival around 1770, comparative lull from 1790 on, and another revival from 1813 to 1830—can be explained by a combination of economic and political factors. In the Batavian-

French period (1795–1813), questions are raised about the enlightened optimism that gave an impetus to writings about trade in the 1770s–1780s, in which the merchant's virtue was presented as the cure for economic decline. Around 1790, there is serious doubt about whether trade and republican freedom can be combined and about whether the Dutch nation's trading spirit has not brought more misery than prosperity. Several authors would rather see the Dutch future founded on the solid soil of agriculture than on the shaky foundations of trade.[30]

During the French occupation (1806–1813), the Dutch economy reaches its absolute nadir. While in 1806 more than 1,500 ships visit Amsterdam, in 1810 no more than 200 do so, and in 1811, not a single one.[31] The "crushing" of the "exterminator of our people," the "tyrant" Napoleon in 1813 once more gets the ink flowing.[32] Poets such as W.H. Warnsinck, the owner of a sugar refinery, and Jan Fredrik Helmers, a wealthy businessman and in his lifetime one of the most famous poets of the Netherlands, survey the debris left by the French: "'k zing uw Handel niet, mijn Holland!—neen, ik ween" [I can no longer laud your trade, my Holland!—no, I weep], Helmers writes in "De handel" [Trade] in 1815.[33] But now, the poets take the opportunity to try to rediscover the zeal of 1770–1780 in rousing odes, wishing trade a new blossoming: "de Handel leev'! breek, gulden eeuw! breek aan!" [Let trade revive! O Golden Age, begin!].[34]

In the reality of the next few years, trade hardly reached the glory of yesteryear. Through an active mercantilist trade policy and through stimulating industrialization (especially in the new part of the kingdom, Belgium), the new king William I tried to revive the economy, with very limited success. In this context, once again a competition held by a society tried to raise poetic optimism about a better future for the national economy. In 1824, the Gendsche Maatschappij van Nederlandsche Taal en Letterkunde [Ghent Society for Dutch Language and Literature] in Belgium, founded for the promotion of cultural exchange between the two parts of the kingdom, held a poetry competition on the subject "De koophandel, beschouwd als een voornaam middel van volksbeschaving" [Trade, Considered as an Important Resource for Popular Civilization]. The winner of the gold medal was the female poet Petronella Moens, and the silver medal was won by the civil servant Carel Godfried Withuys. Their poems were published in 1826 in volume one of the proceedings of the Society. Withuys' poem was called *Het feest van den handel* [*The Feast of Trade*], a title that adequately summed up the message of the trade poems of this period. Two poems, both titled "De koophandel" [Trade] by the broker and poet Theodorus Johannes Kerkhoven, published a year earlier, were possibly inspired by the same 1824 competition. In 1828 the poet and office clerk Lambrecht van den Broek completed the series with "Nederlands koophandel" [Dutch Trade].

The nineteenth-century trade poetry elaborates a number of themes that are already present in the eighteenth-century poems. The broad historical perspective is maintained and even stretched further, and the lines traced through history become more distinct. A major difference between the eighteenth- and the nineteenth-century poems, however, is that now the origins and further development of trade are no longer conceived as an aspect of the historical process, but as the quintessence and the *primum movens* of global history and of the historical process as such. (Accordingly, the poetic competition of 1826 had as its theme trade, considered as an

"important resource for popular civilization"—in the most general terms—whereas the competition of 1775 aimed at poems in praise of *Dutch* trade.)

The poets arrive at their position on the almighty powers of trade by following two general lines of thought. Both are rather common in the international economic literature of the period and traces of them can be found in some of the eighteenth-century poems, as well. What makes the nineteenth-century poems remarkable, however, is the extent to which these lines of thought are pushed to the extreme.

"TRADE WILL SET THE BALANCE RIGHT"

The first line of thought is that of trade as a global balancing force, in current scholarship labeled the "Universal Economy Doctrine." [35] The concept can already be found in classical authors such as Libanius, but it seems to have gained currency through a passage in Grotius' 1609 *Mare liberum* [*The Free Sea*]:

> God did not accord all things to all parts of the earth, but he has divided his gifts among different countries, so that peoples should have need one of the other, in order that from their mutual dependence they should be led to maintain society (community) together. Thus He has brought commerce into existence as a means available to all the world of enjoying in common all things wherever they were produced.[36]

Time and again from the mid-eighteenth-century on, this idea surfaces in prose discussions of commerce. The earlier mentioned critical translation by Hoola van Nooten of Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*, for instance, contains a passage that is a nearly literal translation of Grotius' words.[37] Some of the eighteenth-century poems make mention of the idea in passing, but it is only in the nineteenth-century poems that it takes center stage.

The central concept of the Universal Economy Doctrine is that of the fundamentally uneven distribution of resources over the planet. In warmer spheres, edible crops grow abundantly, and fruit can be picked off the trees, while in polar regions, nearly nothing grows. But there, polar bears live, whose hides make excellent fur coats, and whales that supply oil for lamps. Mexico has gold, Bolivia has silver, the Asiatic countries have spices—all of them goods that are scarce in the rest of the world. Kerkhoven formulates this basic principle concisely: "Dáár een gezegend volk, hier één, dat honger lijdt." [Over there, a blessed people… here, one that starves to death].[38] Fortunately there is a solution available for mankind to compensate for this "cruel" or "step motherly" act of God (or "Nature"). Trade, and especially large-scale trade across the seas, is a force that establishes a new equilibrium by transporting goods from one side of the world to the other: "Maar neen, de Handel zal het evenwigt herstellen" [But no, Trade will set the balance right].

As the unequal distribution of resources is a condition that existed from the very beginning of the planet, this thought logically takes the poets further back in history than to the times of the great trading empires—Phoenicia, Greece, Rome—or even to the "Golden Age" (*Aura Aetas*) as conceived by most eighteenth-century poets. They now extensively describe the circumstances that confronted original

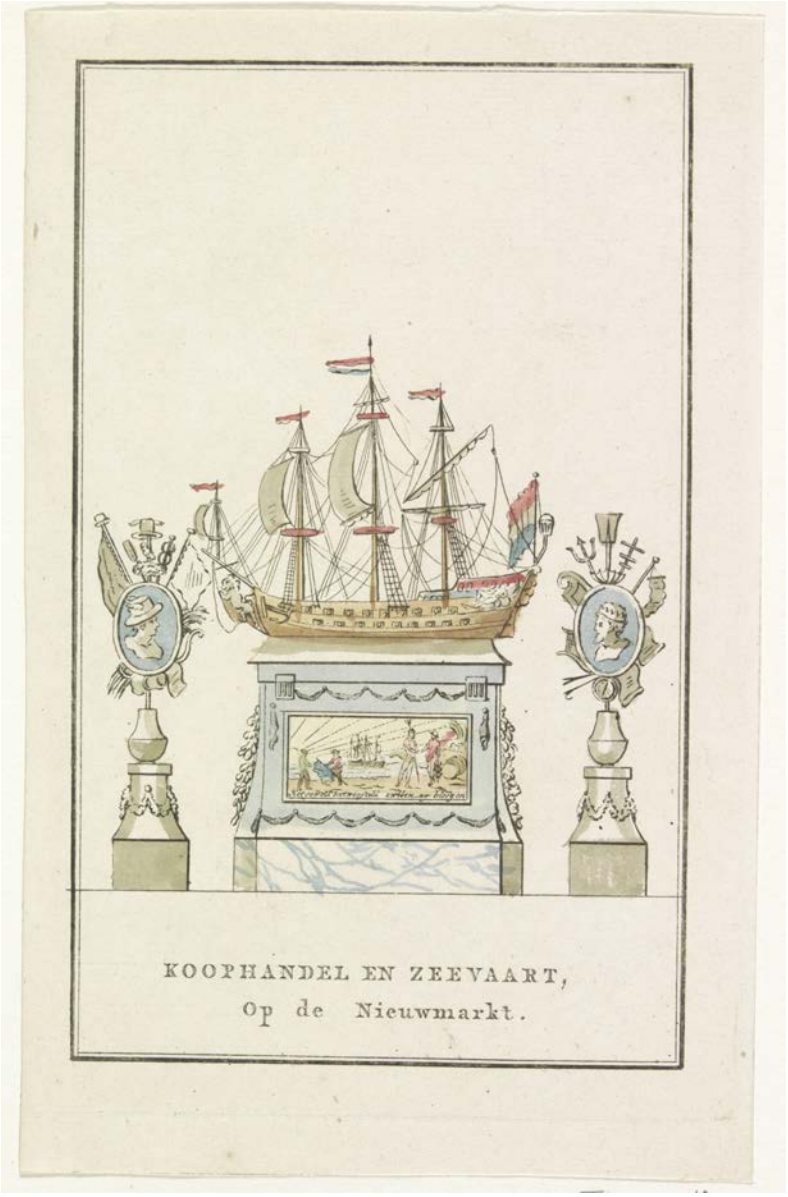

Figure 3. Trade and Navigation. Allegorical decoration, erected at the Nieuwmarkt in Amsterdam on the occasion of the alliance between the Revolutionary France and the Batavian Republic in 1795. The illustration was published in *Beschryving van het plechtige volksfeest, gehouden te Amsterdam, op den 19 juny 1795* [Description of the Grand Ceremony for the People, held in Amsterdam June 19 1795]. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-86.528.

man, the "primitives" or "wild peoples." According to the Dutch poets, original man was "verdierlijkt" [animalized] and wandered around "misvormd, verstompt en naakt" [misshapen, dulled, and naked]. If such a "verbeeste mens" ["bestialized man"] found anything to eat, it would be a dog.[39] In this beastly state, original man was without will or initiative, victim to the forces of nature. In the hard struggle for existence, he knew no social life. The poet Moens paints a particularly gruesome

image of this "jammerstaat" [state of weeping] in which the savage "in bebloede beestenvachten/ Het lillend vleesch verslindt, en in spelonken schuilt" [in bloody animal skins/ devours the quivering flesh, and hides in caves].[40] Accordingly, several of the poems impress upon us that Rousseau's noble savage, content in his natural state, never existed.[41] Helmers, for instance, writes:

> Vergeefs doet gij, Rousseau! uw tovertaal ons hooren!
> Neen! voor den dierenstaat is 't menschdom niet geboren;
> Om rond te zwerven in de bosschen, op den boom
> Te klautren, om zijn' dorst te lesschen aan den stroom![42]
>
> [In vain, Rousseau, upon us you have unleashed
> your magic word! Men were not born as beasts
> to wander in the woods, in trees to seek
> some squalid food, to quench their thirst from creeks!]

From this pitiful state, man was liberated by trade: "De handel voert ons toe wat ons natuur moog weigren" [Trade supplies us with what nature may deny us].[43]

In the Netherlands, the process began, according to Lambrecht van den Broek, with barter. The first inhabitants, the "Batavians," bartered their animal skins for shields and swords with "wulpsche vreemdelingen" [lascivious strangers].[44] Subsequently, money was used as a trade instrument. A third phase was characterized by expansion: trade between neighbors became world trade:

> 't Was daarom, o Natuur! dat gij het Oost met weelde
> En 't armelijke Noord stiefmoederlijk bedeelde,
> Opdat de zucht naar meer, die steeds den mensch bezielt,
> 't Onmisbaar evenwigt in 't groot heelal behield.[45]
>
> [That's why, o Nature, you gave luxury
> To East, and to poor North lean misery,
> So that man's primal drive, the need for more
> The balance of the universe can restore].

DOUX COMMERCE: TRADE AS A CIVILIZING FORCE

A second cluster of themes dominating the nineteenth-century Dutch trade poems centers around the idea of trade as a gentle, civilizing force. This idea is of course closely connected to the concept of trade as a force that will set the balance right. For the tradition from Libanius to Grotius states that God or Nature has willed the inequality of resources to make men and peoples dependent upon each other and hence to stimulate them to form mutual relations. Thus, trade becomes *doux commerce*, the French term under which it has acquired a place in economic theory. According to this idea, described in the ground-breaking work of Hirschman, trade is a power which, because of the necessity of contacts between people, brings about peaceful collaboration.[46] For decades this was a leitmotif in numerous economic treatises, from the middle of the eighteenth century on. For Marx and Engels, it still had enough currency to be the subject of ironic jokes: Marx's description of the murderous behavior of the Dutch in their colonies is followed by the words "Das ist der *doux commerce!*" [A fine example of *doux commerce!*].[47]

Figure 4. Allegory on the liberation of the Netherlands in 1813. In this print by Reinier Vinkeles, a dark cave is depicted in which Violence, Discord, and (French) Deceit step upon Freedom and Trade. At the top of the hill, Hercules is led by justice.

Such irony was far from Dutch authors, who wholeheartedly embraced the idea of trade as a gentle force. As already mentioned, the translator Hoola van Nooten strongly objected to Montesquieu's idea that, while commerce might be an instrument of civilization for agrarian societies, it functions as a force corrupting the *moeurs pures* of more civilized societies. Where Montesquieu, precisely on the occasion of a visit to the Dutch Republic, concluded that "the heart of people living in modern commercial states is entirely corrupted," Hoola van Nooten countered: "Trade makes people more social, or you could say less savage, more industrious and active." Because merchants have more to protect, they are more likely to defend their freedom and rights.[48]

The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Dutch poems strongly endorse this line of thinking. According to them, trade is a force operating with "fluweelen koorden" [velvet cords].[49] It is a civilizing power and the very starting point and engine of human civilization.

> Wat was het middel, waardoor 't Menschdom uit den nacht,
> Den poel van woestheid, ter beschaving werd gebragt?
> Wat geest, wat godheid sprak? wie heeft de woeste horden
> Vereenigd? wie den Mensch het eerst den Mensch doen worden?
> De Handel was het; ja, Gewijden! hij verscheen,
> En 's Menschen geest ontlook, en bastaardij verdween.[50]
>
> [What did extract mankind from its abomination
> of wilderness and night, towards civilization?
> What spirit or what god did speak? And what has unified
> the savage hordes? What was it that supplied
> man with humanity? Trade, faithful! Once arrived
> It woke man's spirit, mischief could not survive].

Trade is "the origin, bond, and backbone of Society," Helmers states, while Kerkhoven adds "Door Handel ziet men 't heil van 't vaderland verhoogen;/ Hij stelt in ieder mensch een' broeder ons voor oogen" [By trade the welfare of the fatherland is enhanced;/ and it reveals to us our brother in each man].[51]

Moreover, this general civilizing power of trade marks only just the beginning of the civilization process. All more advanced, "higher" forms of civilization also spring from trade. Arguing their case, the poets usually refer to developments in shipping and technology. Trade is the force that first led mankind to sail the seven seas, in order to establish an equilibrium in the distribution of resources. Seafaring nations naturally started studying stellar and planetary movements, weather conditions, and the tides, thus founding astronomy, mathematics, and physics. And they developed all kinds of technological inventions. Some of these, like the sail and the rudder, were of a basic kind. Others, like the compass and the astrolabe, were highly advanced. Several of the nineteenth-century poems even extend the principle to the recent invention of the steamboat, also described as an achievement that was entirely due to trade: "Ja, handel, op uw wenk, verhief de mensch, den stoom/ Tot adem, die het hout doet leven op den stroom" [Yes, trade, at your command, man summoned steam/ to animate a piece of wood upon the stream].[52] And, what is more, the accomplishments of both arts and sciences could be distributed across the globe through trade and shipping, which makes trade not only the source, but also the continuous promoter of artistic or scientific endeavors and products. This makes trade the driving force behind all enlightenment.

Thus, in the nineteenth-century poems, trade becomes worshipped as the foundation and cornerstone of all forms of "higher" civilization and culture. However, a possibly even greater civilizing power of trade lies in its ability to shape the world into a global community and to promote peace across the whole world. Linking the universal economy doctrine more tightly than ever to the concept of *doux commerce*, Helmers writes:

> Ja, die verscheidenheid, die ik op d'aardbol vind,
> Is weldaad, is een band, die 't all' aaneenverbindt.
> Hij maakt het een gewest afhanklijk van het ander;
> Ja, mededeeling hecht de volken aan elkander!
> [. . .]
> Dus vormt ge, o Handel! de Aard' tot één Gemeenebest,
> En hecht het Zuid aan 't Noord, en 't Oosten aan het West.[53]

[Yes, the diversity I find upon the earth
is benefit, that keeps it all together in its girth.
It makes one land dependent upon another;
Yes, sharing links the peoples all together.
(…)
You make, o Trade! the world one commonwealth
that links south to the north, east to the west].

Hence, trade is the driving force behind human society, on a global level. According to Van den Broek, trade connects nations in a "web of interest," and Withuys stresses that trade molds people into citizens of the world: "Gij [de handel] zwaait den tooverstaf, die 's menschen geest ontblindt,/ Hem wereldburger maakt, hem aan 't geheel verbindt!" [Thou (Trade), thou wavest thy wand, and clarifies man's mind,/ Makes him a world citizen and links him to his kind!].[54]

The Dutch authors also go one step further. Warnsinck's poem, for example, addresses a deified personification of trade "O, Thou great God of Trade!" and Van den Broek describes the powers of the god of trade in the words:

Daar zit hij op zijn troon, omringd door al zijn zonen;
De groote Handelgod: een tal van rijke kroonen
Ligt voor zijn voetbank neêr, 't is of Natuur en kunst,
Naijvrig op elkaar, wedijvren om zijn gunst [. . .][55]

[Surrounded by his sons, he's seated on his throne,
The mighty God of Trade; a number of rich crowns
is laid before his footstool, as if through their labors,
Nature and Art strive enviously for his favors].

As the *primum movens* behind all civilization, trade takes its place next to God.[56] Trade is taken from the world of *natura naturata*, brought into that of the *natura naturans*, and promoted to the force that controls the whole cosmos. Eventually, it appears that trade has made man into man proper: "Gij hebt den mensch gevormd, door u is 't dat hij denkt" [Thou hast formed man, he can reason because of thee]. God may have created man, but it was trade that made him truly human.[57]

Strangely enough, these poets, devout believers as they no doubt are, hardly hesitate to place the profane phenomenon of trade on the same level as God, or to present it as a kind of replacement for God. The poets hail trade, not just as a possible means for benefit, but as a godlike power, as "a God whose breath giveth life, prosperity and pleasure", as the force "that out of savage howling formed our human speech," or "that has formed man" and gave him humanity.[58] At a time when there was little confidence in the future of trade, such semi-religious fantasies veiled the necessity of practical solutions and a forward thinking economic policy. If trade is some kind of god, then godliness is the only remedy in the hour of need. Notwithstanding the fervor with which the poets urge their countrymen to revive trade, their poems actually suggest that the wealth of the nations no longer depends upon merchants, regents, or kings, but rather lies in the invisible hand of God or Nature.

EPILOGUE

In the early modern era, the Dutch Republic established an economic discourse that presented trade as the cause of prosperity and civilization, and eventually even of "humanity" and world citizenship. This discourse was developed in economic tracts and treatises, but more dramatically so in literary texts from 1770 to 1830, in ever longer poems that gave center stage to trade and its history. In this period, the focus shifted from the individual merchant and his moral economy to trade as a general phenomenon. The poems presented trade as the great equalizer and ultimately even as a divine creative force of nature. From then on, it was not the merchant but trade itself, that shaped the Dutch nation: "De Handel spreekt! de grond, in wier en moer bedolven,/ Rijst magtig naar omhoog, ontscheurt zich aan de golven" [Trade speaks! the soil mightily rises from its grave/ Of kelp and mud, wrests itself from the waves].[59]

Thus considered, it is striking that the long tradition of poems in praise of trade, so suitable for the country where it once blossomed, abruptly ended after 1830. The explanation might be found at the crossroads of four lines of development: the industrial revolution, esthetics, *doux commerce,* and economic theory. After 1830, the industrial revolution made itself felt in the Netherlands, diminishing the importance of trade. This could have induced long odes to the smoking chimneys and the steam locomotive. However, the development of industrialization in other countries had at that time already revealed the dark sides of industrial capitalism. Another factor can be found in the realm of poetics. After 1830, the extended didactic poems and odes lost their popularity to the lyrical poem. Even more important is that trade itself became discredited. With the growing support for the abolition of slavery and for liberal ideals of equality, the concept of *doux commerce*, of trade as a gentle force, became increasingly difficult to defend. For instance, in 1828, Petronella Moens needed many stanzas to explain that it was not the spirit of trade, but "blind ambition," "grasping greed," and "selfishness" that led to the massacre of American Indians. Neither was the "dismal fate" of the African slaves the consequence of "noble Trade," but of "the lowly urge of avarice."[60] Rather, the true spirit of trade had liberated the slaves by then. Moens prematurely seemed to expect that the United Kingdom's prohibition of the Transatlantic slave trade in 1807 would mean the abolition of slavery altogether: "Brak 't handeldrijvend Albion/ Vol grootheid niet het juk der slaven?" [Did not the trading Albion/ High-mindedly break the slaves' yoke?]. In Australia, too, according to Moens, it was trade that "lit the torch of Enlightenment." For the true spirit of trade is "loth of yoke and chains." In the course of the nineteenth century, this kind of naïve reasoning would become ever harder to keep up.

But what really spelled the end of the poetical-economical didactic poems was the rise of economic theory as an academic discipline. With the new education laws of 1815, economy became an academic discipline and a specialism (albeit under the auspices of the Faculty of Law).[61] From now on, specialists would further develop and increasingly appropriate economic concepts and terms, making economics a less and less suitable subject for poetry.

NOTES

1. A.H. Hagedoorn, "De lof van den Nederlandschen koophandel," in *Proeven van Poëtische Mengelstoffen [. . .] Kunstliefde Spaart Geen Vlijt, en Prijsvaarzen*, 13 vols. (Leiden: C. van Hoogeveen, 1774-1789), 5:211. We are grateful to the Dutch poet Han van der Vegt for translating the trade poems. The translations are not to the letter, but aim to transmit both the general content and the rhetoric of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century verses. For a first exploration of the genre of trade poetry, see G.J. Johannes and I. Leemans, "'Van den handel zou hij zingen'. Nederlandse koophandelsgedichten 1770–1830," *De Negentiende Eeuw* 40, no. 1 (2016): 1–33.

2. The Dutch word "koophandel" as used in the early modern era incorporates both the English words "trade" and "commerce." "*Koop*handel" emphasizes the use of money ("Kopen" is "to buy"). In the 20th-century, the term "koophandel" lost its dominance to the more general term "handel" [trade]. For an introduction to early modern Dutch economic theory, see: *Economic Thought in the Netherlands, 1650–1950*, ed. J. van Daal and A. Heertje (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992); K. Davids, "Economic Discourse in Europe between Scholasticism and Mandeville: Convergence, Divergence and the Case of the Dutch Republic," in *Departure for Modern Europe. A Handbook of Early Modern Philosophy, 1400–1700*, ed. H. Busche (Hamburg: Meiner Felix Verlag, 2011), 80–95; P.C. H. Overmeer, *De economische denkbeelden van Gijsbert Karel van Hogendorp (1762–1834)* (Tilburg: H. Gianotten, 1982).

3. J. van den Vondel, *Inwydinge van 't Stadhuis t'Amsterdam*, ed. S. Albrecht, et al. (Muiderberg: D. Coutinho, 1982), 82.

4. Deirdre McCloskey has stated that this discourse of what she labels "bourgeois virtues" was essential in paving the way for capitalist society. D. McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics can't explain the Modern World* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2010).

5. This is extensively discussed in S. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London: Collins, 1987); *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, ed. M.C. Jacob and C. Secretan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 75–97, re-evaluates the Weber thesis on protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism through analysis of merchant self-writing.

6. The most famous examples are "De Koopman" by Coornhert (1580); "Mercator Sapiens" (the oration Barlaeus held in 1632 on the occasion of the opening festivities of the Athenaeum Illustre in Amsterdam); and the extensive tractate *Geestelijck Roer van 't Coopmans-schip* (1638) by the reformed minister Udemans. Cf. M. Spies, "De koopman van Rhodos. Over de schakelpunten van economie en cultuur," *De zeventiende eeuw* 6, no. 1 (1990): 166–173.

7. Arthur Weststeijn described the development of "commercial republicanism" in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, e.g. in the works of Johan and Pieter de la Court. This discourse linked the centrality of commerce with republican ideology, constructing an account of commercial citizenship "whereby the merchant who honorably pursues his self-interest within the borders of civil discipline personifies the true republican citizen." A. Weststeijn, *Commercial Republicanism in the Dutch Golden Age: The Political Thought of Johan & Pieter de la Court* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 345–49. Commercial republicanism can be seen as a commercial counterpart to the "civic humanism" as described in J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1975). The Dutch Republic is not the only country that reconciled the classical ideal of civic virtue with a more commercially shaded ideal. S. Pincus, "Neither Machiavellian Moment nor Possessive Individualism: Commercial Society and the Defenders of the English Commonwealth," *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 3 (1998): 705–36.

8. D. Sturkenboom, "Staging the Merchant: Commercial Vices and the Politics of Stereotyping in Early Modern Dutch Theatre," *Dutch Crossing* 30, no. 2 (2006), 211–28.

9. Roeland van Leuve, *'s Waerelds koopslot of de Amsteldamse beurs* (Amsterdam: Jacobus Verheyden, 1723). On the South Sea Bubble pamphlets and plays in the Netherlands, see I. Leemans, "Verse Weavers and Paper Traders: Speculation in the Theatre," in W.N. Goetzmann, et al., eds., *The Great Mirror of Folly: Finance, Culture, and the Crash of 1720* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2013), 175–90. Gelderblom and Jonker argue that the Dutch "bubble" was only a "squeeze" and did not result in grave bankruptcies or financial crisis. O. Gelderblom and J. Jonker, "Mirroring Different Follies: The Character of the 1720 Bubble in the Dutch Republic," in Goetzmann et al., eds., *The Great Mirror of Folly*, 121–40.

10. O.Z. van Haren first published *De koophandel, Lierzang. Aan 't Zeeuwsche Genoodschap der Weetenschappen* (Zwolle: s.n., 1769). Different versions of this poem were later published as opening stanzas in *Aan het Vaderland* (Leeuwarden: Abraham Ferwerda, 1769) and *De Geusen* (Zwolle: Simon Clement, 1771). Later still, he wrote a second poem on trade, "De koopman," published in Van Haren, *De koopman. De staatsman. De schimmen* (Zwolle: Simon Clement, 1778); J. Macquet, "Zeevaerdy en koophandel," in *Dichtlievende uitspanningen: Bevattende heldinnen brieven, natuerkundige beschouwingen, mengelwerk* (Zierikzee: J. de Kanter, 1772), 204–16.

11. Bakker, "De lof van den Nederlandschen koophandel (Accessit)", 248 (see note 15).

12. J. van den Vondel, *Twee zeevaart-gedichten*, ed. M. Spies (Amsterdam/Oxford/New York: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1987). We know of no long poems specifically dedicated to trade from before 1770.

13. A.M. Lemierre, "Le Commerce: Poëme," *Journal de commerce*, March 1760, 7–11; Th. Rousseau, *Les fastes du commerce ou Le Commerce: poème historique en XII chants avec des notes* (Paris: Le Couturier, 1784); Firmin de Caen Douin, "Le Commerce, poëme. Qui a eu l'Accessit à l'Académie Françoise, en 1754" (mentioned by Terjanian, *Commerce and its Discontents*, 1).

14. For instance, Macquet, "Zeevaerdy en koophandel," 204–209.

15. The three poems were published in *Proeven van Poëtische Mengelstoffen [. . .] Kunstliefde Spaart Geen Vlijt, en Prijsvaarzen*, 13 vols. (Leiden: C. van Hoogeveen, 1774-1789), 5:195–215 (Gold medal: A.H. Hagedoorn); 216–33 (Silver medal: J.A. Bakker); 234–48 (Accessit: J.A. Bakker).

16. The three award winning treatises by Hendrik Herman van den Heuvel (gold), Adriaan Rogge (silver), and Cornelis Zillesen (bronze) were published in *Verhandelingen uitgegeeven door de Hollandsche Maatschappye der Weetenschappen te Haarlem* 16 (1775): 1–160 (Van den Heuvel); 161–306 (Rogge); 307–548 (Zillesen). On this subject, see K. Stapelbroek, "The Haarlem 1771 Prize Essay on the Restoration of Dutch Trade and the Economic Branch of the Holland Society of Sciences," in *The Rise of Economic Societies in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. K. Stapelbroek and J. Marjanen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 257–84. The utilitarian ideology of Dutch literary societies is discussed in M. de Vries, *Beschaven! Letterkundige genootschappen in Nederland, 1750–1800* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2001). On the decline of the Dutch Republic, see J.J. Kloek and W.W. Mijnhardt, *1800: Blueprints for a National Community* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2004). M.C. Jacob and W.W. Mijnhardt, eds., *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century: Decline, Enlightenment and Revolution* (Ithaca NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1992).

17. For instance, the very popular book by S. Stijl, *De opkomst en bloei van de Republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden* (Amsterdam: Petrus Conradi, 1774); and E. Luzac, *Hollands rijkdom, behelsende den oorsprong van den koophandel*, 4 vols. (Leiden: Luzc & Van Damme, 1780–1783). S.A. Reinert, *Translating Empire: Emulation and the Origins of Political Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2011), 56–57, mentions a striking rise in the amount of Dutch language publications and translations in the field of political economy in the period 1770–1780.

18. *De Koopman,* 4 vols. (Amsterdam, 1768–1773).

19. David Hume, *Wysgeerige en Staatkundige Verhandelingen* (Amsterdam: Bothall, Vis & Holsteyn, 1764). On Dutch translations of Hume, see L. Weber, "Predicting the Bankruptcy of England. David Hume's Political Discourses and the Dutch Debate on National Debt in the Eighteenth Century," *Early Modern Low Countries* 1, no 1 (2017): 135–55; Montesquieu, *De Aart der Wetten*, trans. anonymous (Amsterdam: Jacobus Kok, 1771–1773); Montesquieu, *De Geest der Wetten,* 4 vols., trans. Dirk Hoola van Nooten (Amsterdam: Willem Holtrop, 1783–1787); Fr. Véron-Duverger de Forbonnais, *Het begin, opkomst en voortgang des koophandels*. 2 vols. (Utrecht: H. Spruit & P. Haanebrink, 1771). See also I. Nijenhuis, "For the Sake of the Republic: The Dutch Translation of Forbonnais's Elémens du Commerce," *History of European Ideas* 40, no. 8 (2014), 1202–16; E.B. de Condillac, *De koophandel en het staats bestuur, beschouwt in hunne onderlinge betrekkingen* (Utrecht: Bartholomé Wild, 1782). About Dirk Hoola van Nooten, who translated both Montesquieu and Condillac as well as Adam Smith, see K. Davids, "Tussen Smith en Schoonhoven: De verloren wereld van Dirk Hoola van Nooten (1747–1808)," in *Levenslopen in transformatie*, ed. T. Engelen, et al. (Nijmegen: Valkhof Pers, 2011), 222–35. See also A. Heertje, "Naspeuringen naar de eerste Nederlandse vertaling van *The Wealth of Nations* van Adam Smith," in *Boekenwijsheid: drie eeuwen kennis en cultuur in 30 bijzondere boeken*, ed. J. Bruijn, et al. (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2009), 258–66.

20. Montesquieu, *De geest der wetten*, 2:321–38.

21. W. Velema, *Enlightenment and Conservatism in the Dutch Republic. The Political Thought of Elie Luzac (1721–1796)* (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1993), 115; Idem, *Republicans. Essays on Eighteenth-Century Dutch Political Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 94–96.

22. W. Velema, "Homo mercator in Holland. Elie Luzac en het achttiende-eeuwse debat over de koophandel," *BMGN/Low Countries Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (1985), 427–44.

23. Kloek and Mijnhardt, *1800*; De Vries, *Beschaving*.

24. Velema, *Enlightenment and Conservatism*, 125. Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976), and Istvan Hont, "The Language of Sociability and Commerce: Samuel Pufendorf and the Theoretical Foundations of the 'Four-Stages Theory," in A. Pagden, ed., *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986), 253–76.

25. Van Haren, "De koopman," 2.

26. Van Haren, "De koopman," 4.

27. Macquet , "Zeevaerdy en koophandel," 214.

28. Bakker, "De lof van den Nederlandsche Koophandel (Accessit)," 241.

29. Helmers, "De handel," in *Nagelaten gedichten* (The Hague: J. Allart, 1823, 3d ed.), 77–103; W.H. Warnsinck, "De koophandel," *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* 1816 [year], Tweede stuk, Mengelwerk, 309–18; T.J. Kerkhoven, "De koophandel," in *Gedichten*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: M. Westerman, 1825), 1:101–4 and Kerkhoven, "De koophandel, dichtstuk" in *Gedichten*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: M. Westerman, 1825), 2:1–29; C.G. Withuys, "Het feest van den handel (Een dichterlijk verhaal aan Edwin)," *Verhandelingen en prijsverzen uitgegeven door de Gendsche Maatschappij van Nederlandsche Taal en Letterkunde* 1 (1826):185–202; P. Moens, "De koophandel beschouwd als een voornaam middel van volksbeschaving," *Ibid.*, 171–84; L. van den Broek, "Nederlands koophandel," in *Gedichten* (Rotterdam: Wed. J. Allart, 1828), 21–42.

30. W. Ockerse, *Ontwerp tot eene algemeene characterkunde,* 3 vols. (Utrecht: G.T. van Paddenburg, 1797), 3:136–40. W. Velema, "Republikeinse democratie. De politieke wereld van de Bataafse Revolutie, 1795–1798," in *Het Bataafse experiment: Politiek en cultuur rond 1800*, ed. F. Grijzenhout, et al. (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2013), 27–63. Cf. P.G. Brusse and W.W. Mijnhardt, *Towards a New Template for Dutch History: De-Urbanization and the Balance between City and Countryside* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2011).

31. J. Jonker en K. Sluyterman, *Thuis op de wereldmarkt: Nederlandse handelshuizen door de eeuwen heen* (Den Haag: SDU, 2000), 140–45.

32. Warnsinck, "De koophandel," 309.

33. Helmers, "De handel," 101.

34. Helmers, "De handel," 103.

35. See J. Viner, *The Role of Providence in Social Order: An Essay in Intellectual History* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1972), 32–42. Idem, "Early Attitudes toward Trade and the Merchant," in *Essays on the Intellectual History of Economics*, ed. D.A. Irwin (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press 1991), 39–44; D.A. Irwin, *Against the Tide: An Intellectual History of Free Trade* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1996), 15–25; J. Hengstmengel, *Divine Oeconomy: The Role of Providence in Early-Modern Economic Thought before Adam Smith* (Rotterdam: Erasmus Univ. Press 2015), chapter 3.

36. Quoted in Viner, *Essays*, 42.

37. Montesquieu, *De geest der wetten*, 1:322.

38. Kerkhoven, "De koophandel," 12.

39. Helmers, "De handel," 93.

40. Moens, "De koophandel," 173.

41. The Dutch are very critical of Rousseau, but his ideas set the intellectual agenda. H. Paul, "Rousseau in de Republiek: Nederlandse reacties op de burgerlijke godsdienst van Jean-Jacques Rousseau," *Groniek* 32, no. 146 (1999-2000), 103–13. W. Gobbers, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau in Holland: Een onderzoek naar de invloed van de mens en het werk (ca. 1760–1810)* (Gent: secr. KVATL, 1963).

42. Helmers, "De handel," 83.

43. Moens, "De koophandel," 183.

44. Van den Broek, "Nederlands koophandel," 26.

45. Van den Broek, "Nederlands koophandel," 29.

46. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*. Terjanian has recently summarized the historiography of *doux commerce* and also contested the concept. See A.F. Terjanian, *Commerce and its Discontents in Eighteenth-Century French Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013).

47. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, 62. Cf. Terjanian, *Commerce and its Discontents*, 11. See also the nuances Hirschman applied in "Rival Interpretations of Market Society: Civilizing, Destructive, or Feeble?," *Journal of Economic Literature* 20, no. 4 (1982), 1463–84.

48. Montesquieu, *De geest der wetten*, 2:335–36.

49. Moens, "De koophandel," 177.

50. Helmers, "De handel," 84.

51. Kerkhoven, "De koophandel, dichtstuk," 12

52. Withuys, "Het feest van den handel," 198. Cf. Kerkhoven, "De koophandel, dichtstuk," 13.

53. Helmers, "De handel," 87. See about Helmer's cosmopolitan ideals L. Jensen, "Wereldburgerschap als verzetsdaad: Kosmopolitisme en patriottisme bij Jan Fredrik Helmers", *De Negentiende Eeuw* 35, no. 1-2 (2011), 59–72.

54. Van den Broek, "Nederlands koophandel," 31; Withuys, "Het feest van den handel," 199.

55. Warnsinck, "De koophandel," 318; Van den Broek, "Nederlands koophandel," 24.

56. It is interesting to note that, whereas the expression "God of Trade" occurs frequently in Dutch texts dating from before 1770, it always refers to the classical "God of Trade" Mercury. The poems considered here, however, elevate trade itself to the rank the Ancients would have attributed, not to Mercury but to Jove.

57. Helmers, "De handel," 92.

58. Withuys, "Het feest van den handel", 189; Moens, "De koophandel", 174; Helmers, "De handel", 92.

59. Helmers, "De handel," 88.

60. Moens, "De koophandel," 177–81.

61. On the development of Dutch economics as an academic discipline, see I. Hasenberg Butter, *Academic Economics in Holland: 1800-1870* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969).